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Pilgrimage, Politics and Surveillance: The temple of Jagannath and the colonial state in early 19th century Orissa

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The temple of Jagannath became central to colonial politics as early as the first year of British rule in Puri. Throughout the 19th century, the temple was an essential concern for British administrators, both in the colony as well as in the metropolis. In this paper, I demonstrate how pilgrimage became a pivotal anchor surrounding which a convoluted narrative of colonial politics played out. I have looked closely at the concept of 'itinerancy' associated with pilgrimage, and have tried to explain how itinerancy in the early 19th century became a governmental hazard for the colonial overlords. The constant fear of a faceless and mobile crowd prompted the advent of newer governmental techniques, primary of which was the documentation of pilgrim identities. My central concern is with the various modalities through which the government sought to bring pilgrims and pilgrimage under surveillance. The paper interrogates how in early 19th century Orissa, the innocuous act of pilgrimage was transformed into a deep political concern for the colonial state. In framing my narrative about the interaction between the temple and the colonial state, I have juxtaposed temple correspondence with the papers of the Board of Revenue and the House of Commons Parliamentary papers. I then look closely at the pilgrim networks of Puri and governmental concerns surrounding them. Such a study, I believe, will contribute to our understanding of Company rule in Orissa and the governance of a nascent colonial order.

Key Words: temple of Jagannath, Puri, pilgrimage, itinerancy, surveillance, colonial policy, Orissa

Introduction

The temple of Jagannath in Puri (see Figure 1), Orissa, is considered to be one of the premiere places of pilgrimage in Hindu cosmology. Alternatively known as *Purushottamkshetra* or *Nilachala*, Puri is one of the four *dhams* in the Brahminical tradition. A *dham* in common parlance translates into 'abode of god', and it

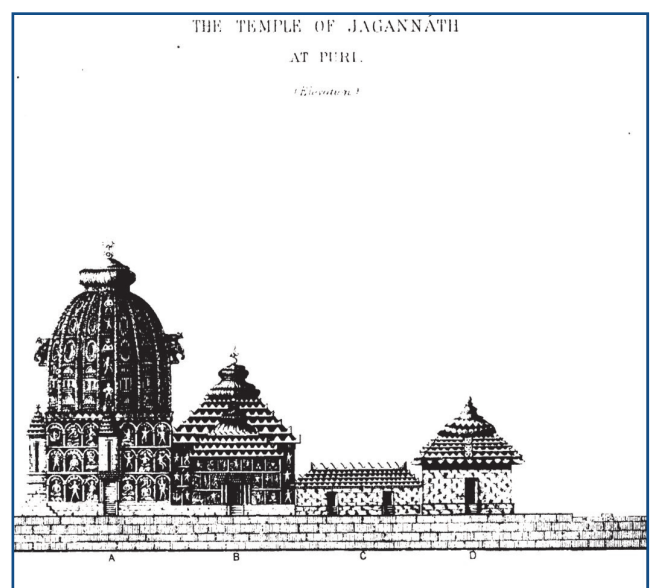
may be described as both the location and the refraction of the divine, a place where it manifests its power, and where one experiences its presence (Eck, 2012:29).

The four *dhams* in India: Badrinath, Dwarka, Rameswaram and Puri (in some traditions Muktinath in Nepal is considered a fifth *dham*. See Singh, 2011) are mostly dedicated to Vishnu, the Preserver in the Hindu Trinity, and they attract countless pilgrims throughout the year.

However, the pilgrim traffic in Puri (in the pre-colonial era) can also be attributed to a particular event - the *Rathayatra* or the car / chariot festival - that took place each year during June-July. The spectacle of the festival was such that it gradually acquired a popular place in the global socio-political context in the course

of the 19th century. The word 'Juggernaut' traces its etymology to the demonisation of this festival by Christian missionaries.

Figure 1: Sketch of the Temple of Jagannath.



Source: WW Hunter, Orissa Volume 2, London: Smith Elder and Co, 1872

Puri's primacy as a pilgrimage centre was acknowledged by the Mughals during their rule in Orissa, and also later by the Marathas (see Mubayi, 2005). However, pilgrimage to the site acquired a mass character only during the late 18th century when development of technology and the birth of a middle class facilitated the act of pilgrimage. There was a substantial increase in pilgrim traffic throughout the 19th century, and during the latter half of the 20th century it reached its zenith. With the gradual spread of the *Hare Krishna* movement of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON), both the *Rathayatra* festival and Puri acquired international pre-eminence.

In this paper, I shall deal with the first two decades of the Company rule in Orissa and attempt to understand how the colonial government responded to the phenomenon of pilgrimage in Puri. The central interrogation deals with the reaction of the colonial state, its attempt to cope with a vast peripatetic population, and the mechanisms it devised to deal with these 'itinerants'.

Pilgrims and Pilgrimage in Theory and Practice

Pilgrimages in South Asia have been studied by anthropologists and sociologists alike, using the theoretical paradigms of identity, transcendence, experience, liminality, and so on. The organisation and transformation of pilgrimage centres on the subcontinent has been dexterously documented by scholars like Peter Van Der Veer (1988), James Lochtefeld (2010), and Kama Maclean (2008). Van Der Veer deals with the various theories on pilgrimage, particularly those of Victor Turner. Turner's influence on the study of ritual practices and sites of pilgrimage is seminal, and lies in the manner in which he attempts

to get away from functionalist arguments about the representation of society by religion.

Van Der Veer on the contrary argues that the dichotomy in Turner's work between pilgrimage as a ritual process as opposed to 'normal life at home' is a product of a religious ideology rather than sociological thinking. Van Der Veer elucidates the functionalist, anti-functionalist and a typological attempt to understand pilgrimage, but concludes that all of them are 'highly abstract' and far removed from the on-the-ground multiple 'meanings attached to *Tirth Yatra*' (Van Der Veer, 1988:62).

My interrogation of pilgrimage, however, revolves around the question of colonial governmentality. I have attempted to look at pilgrimage from the standpoint of 19th century colonial governance and I examine the historical moment when 'pilgrim' as a separate entity featured in colonial governmental concerns. My interest centres on the hazards of pilgrimage, the menace of anonymity, the unmanageability of the crowd, and the overall concern of the colonial state in managing mobile itinerant bodies. Thus, this paper is an attempt to study the political history of pilgrimage and the functioning of a nascent colonial state in the early 19th century. The methodology followed is an archival one. In my reconstruction of early 19th century Puri, I have heavily relied on the colonial official archive; the Board of Revenue proceedings, the Parliamentary papers of the East India Company and juxtaposed them against the Jagannath Temple Correspondence. My aim has been to read and question the colonial archive, as anthropologist Nicholas Dirks puts it, in a way an ethnographer interprets field notes.

The texts which were written mostly by the local priests with the specific purpose of propagating the glory and the religious importance of a sacred place are commonly known as Sthala-mahatmyas. The older of these texts have usually been assigned to or associated with one of the Puranas in order to lend a more authoritative character to them and in the course of development they have often been incorporated in the main body of the Purana (Tripathi, 2014:4).

The *Sthala-mahatmyas* of Puri that include the legend of the cult of Jagannath can be found in the *Skanda*, *Brahma*, and *Padma Puranas* (Tripathi, 2014:4). The legend narrates the mythical story of a king of Malwa, a great devotee of Vishnu, who had come to Orissa following a divine providence (Geib, 2014). He constructed the temple, and began the worship of Jagannath, which was later adopted by the kings of the province. The veracity of the legend is untested, but what can be said with certainty is that the present temple was built around 1135 CE by Anantavarman Chodganga (Kulke, 2014:213).

The temple played a central role in the political proceedings of Orissa. The king was considered a representative of the God, and hence, he ruled the province on His behalf. The temple retained its importance, if not supremacy, during the Mughal and the Maratha regimes. When the East India Company seized the province from the Marathas in 1803, the temple came under their direct administration

(Mukherjee, 1977:29-85). During the early years of their rule, the Company struggled to cope with the growing pilgrim traffic and devised various means to control them. The following sections will demonstrate the anxieties of a nascent colonial order, overwhelmed by the 'menace' of pilgrimage, and the modalities it invented in response to it.

Pilgrim as a Governmental Category

In the archival documents surrounding the temple of Jagannath a particular trend is noticeable, especially in the early part of the colonial rule, and that is the government's over enthusiastic zeal on surveillance both in the space of the temple and on the pilgrims. There was a constant need for surveillance on every aspect of the temple site. This section deals with the various modes of surveillance techniques that were employed by the colonial government stationed in the province. The reason behind the constant watch on the actual temple site meant surveillance on a vast area that spread outside the site as well.

Puri, situated at the coastline, had a very small residential population. At the end of the 19th century, Puri's population was estimated to be 24,803 (Municipal Proceeding of Government of Bengal, No.10, 1891) and, in the early decades of the century it was considerably less. Without a substantial population, there would not be enough subjects to surveil and it would be a fallacious assumption that the colonial government employed a thorough network of surveillance for the handful that actually resided in the place. The category of 'pilgrim' in this conjunction becomes extremely crucial for understanding colonial politics in Puri. The colonial overlords were accustomed to a huge 'settled' population and the intricacies required for effectively governing them. However, pilgrims were populations defined by their peripatetic condition. A residential population had standard modes of control because their coordinates were easy to figure out, while pilgrim as a category possessed a crucial aspect that the government perhaps feared the most, i.e. anonymity. The government had no clue as to where particular pilgrims came from and where they went after their pilgrimage and with the limited schedule they had, it was impossible to figure out for the state machinery anything about their actual whereabouts. The attempts of the colonial government to put the pilgrimage in Orissa under its surveillance is in a way a biography of how the sacred entity of the 'pilgrim' was transformed into a governmental category.

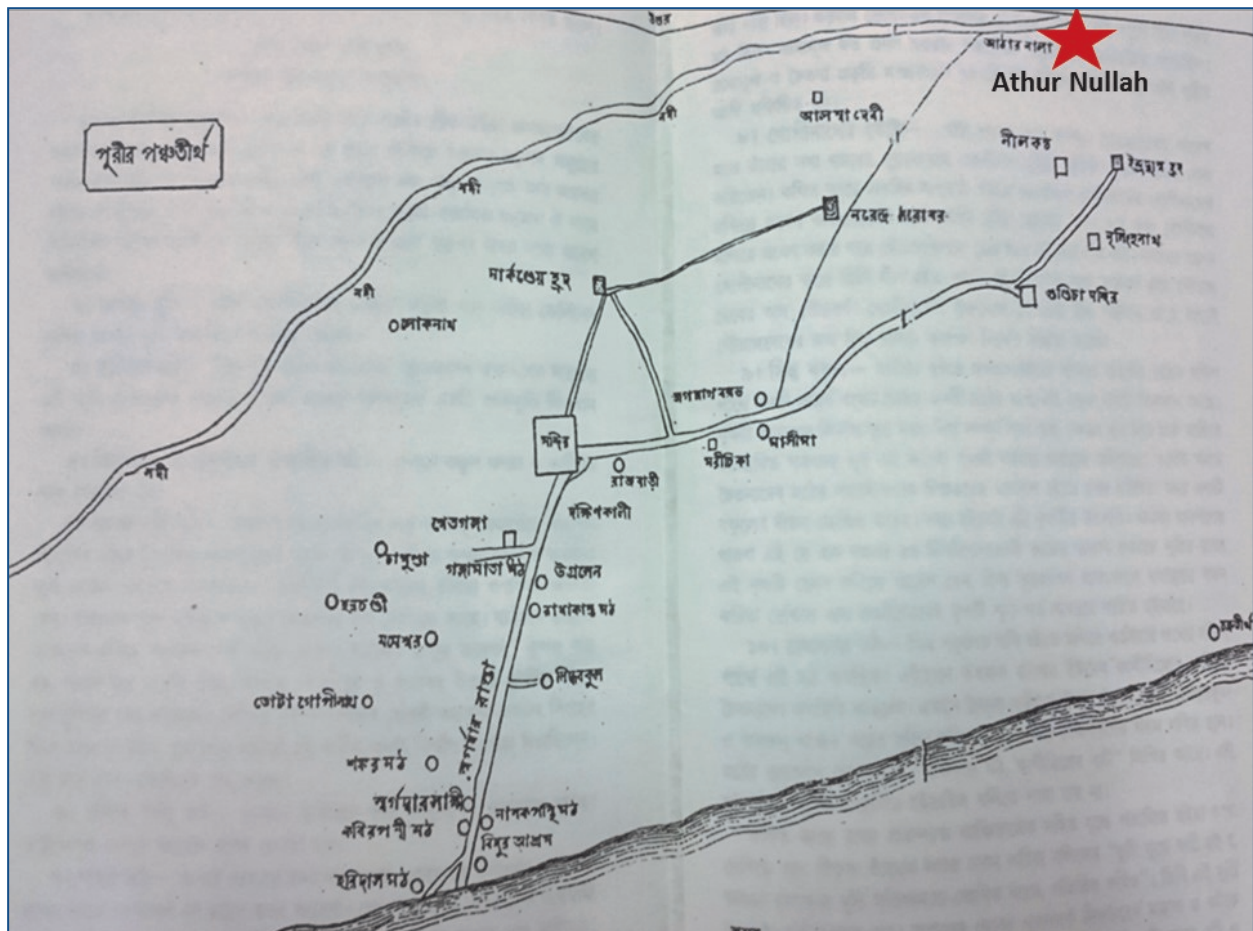
Modalities of Surveillance and Documentation of Identities

Soon after the British conquest of Orissa in 1803, the government decided to make the Jagannath temple a central priority. The rulers made it their occupation to interrogate the condition of the pilgrims as early as 1804. In a letter to the commissioner of affairs of Cuttack, it was observed that a plethora of complaints were received from the pilgrims against the *pandas* (priests) of the temple for 'extorting money by force' after they (the pilgrims) had paid every just fee. Complaints were also received that the *pandas* were 'beating the pilgrims in the cruellest manner' (Jagannath Temple Correspondence, volume one, 21st July 1804). The initial idea was to interrogate the category of 'pilgrim' and gain as much information as possible about the pilgrim-temple relationship. In 1805, Charles Grome was asked to prepare a comprehensive report on the current governance of the temple. Grome submitted his report after conducting his share of ethnography and provided the government with a wide range of information, necessary to run the administration of the temple. A fair share of Grome's report was dedicated to the manner in which pilgrims, who entered the town, were to be governed:

I would, therefore, recommend that the only place of collection for pilgrims coming from Northward be at collectors cutcheree (office) and the best mode of collecting that appears to me is by having a daroga (policeman) at Joobra Ghat whose business, it shall be, when pilgrims arrive there, to make out a list of the number of palanqueens, doolie, horsemen, hackeries and pilgrims on foot and to send them to the collectors cutcherre . . . The daroga must mention the name of sathooa (used as sadhu who brought the pilgrims to Puri with them, loosely translated as a sage or saint), and pandas, who have brought the pilgrims. People of rank who may object to come to the cutcheree for the purpose of paying tax may be permitted to pay the amount to the daroga who will send the name of the pilgrim to the collector who will then furnish him with a pass. The pass shall mention the number of pilgrims with the name of the accompanying punda and any pilgrim not taking a panda may have a pass for himself (Grome, 2002: 26-27).

In the policies of the colonial bureaucracy, a clear effort of mapping this peripatetic population can be noticed. It is not possible to record an itinerant population and thus, the government came up with the most apposite mechanism. In the extract of Grome's report above, he insists on having a list of pilgrims so

Figure 2: Sketch map of Puri, in Bengali



Note: Map shows Athur Nullah (the entrance to town) on the extreme top of the map and the proximity of Puri to the coastline.

Source: Nagendranath Mitra, Puri Tirtha (Calcutta: Gurudash Chattopadhyay, 1915)

that there could be a record that the colonial government could archive. In addition, for those who refused to be listed, Grome made sure that they were recorded through the ‘pass system’. The obsession to control the population that enraptured Europe in the 18th century was also transferred to its colonies. Pilgrim as a category challenged the greater project of controlling the population with its oscillating characteristics. Grome’s methodologies were an attempt to locate this travelling population. He even went on to suggest that the accessories that the pilgrims brought with them should also be noted down by the officials. Grome laid out the possibility of how exactly the paper trail should be followed to eliminate even a single chance of erroneous numbering.

Another darogah (sic) should be stationed at the Autar nullah to whom all passes must be delivered . . . and the pilgrim will return it to the daroga at Joobra Ghat on his way back who is to send it to the Collector. The daroga of the

Autar nullah should likewise send daily by the dawki (letter carrying) an account of the number of passes delivered on each day with the description of the quality of the pilgrims (Grome, 2002: 28).

The daily exchange of information about pilgrims through *dawki* (letter carrying) between the officers of the bureaucracy, encompassing minute details about the pilgrims, demonstrates how strenuous efforts were made by the government to bring the pilgrims under surveillance. Puri with its geographical limitations facilitated in making the surveillance effective. The only entry points to Puri through which pilgrims historically entered were the Athur Nullah Ghat (spelled as Autar nullah in Grome’s report) in the north and the Lokenath Ghat in the south. These two locations increasingly came under the gamut of colonial surveillance (see Figure 2). The Athur Nullah, in particular, became a recurring occurrence in the colonial archive. The government made sure that the

Athur Nullah and the Lokenath Ghat were under scrutiny at all times by officials. Pilgrim taxes (see Gardner, 1988) were collected in these two *ghats*.

The collection from the pilgrims coming from the north began at a place called Khunta on the border of Mayurbhanj and continued up to Autura Nullah, at the entrance of Puroshuttum (Mukherjee, 1977: 139).

A medical establishment was erected in 1804 near Athur Nullah (Jagannath Temple Correspondence, volume one, letter dated 24th May 1804). In 1811, it was transformed into a 'native hospital' (Bengal Revenue Proceedings, No. 57, 29th July 1815) with a number of benefits available for pilgrims, including

surgical treatments (Bengal Revenue Proceedings, No. 12, 14th June 1815).

The government, in order to ascertain that it had every detail about the events taking place in the Athur Nullah Ghat, appointed a *daroga*, an *amla* and a total of 18 officials (House of Common Parliamentary Papers, No. 7, 1812-1813 (194):25). The Lokenath Ghat *cutcheree*, on the other end of the town, had 15 officials posted at all times (Figure 3.1 and 3. 2).

J Hunter, the collector of pilgrim tax in 1806, proposed that:

... certificates be printed, with vacancies for the pilgrims names, according to a form which I shall, if the plan be approved of, forward for the inspection of Government (House of Common Parliamentary Papers, No. 7, 1812-1813 (194):26).

The form contained a series of blanks that were to be filled by pilgrims containing information about their name, original residence, the *panda* that was in charge, and the duration of their stay (Mukherjee, 1977:139). These forms were relatively simple to fill in and were probably filled in by the *pandas* in Oriya, on behalf of the pilgrims. The issuance of the form with definite particulars displays the colonial government's effort to put the pilgrims under strict surveillance. The state mechanism wanted to make sure that a paper trail could be traced even after the pilgrim left Puri.

An attempt to map the population is clearly visible with the colonial policy. The great alacrity with which the forms were printed and issued by the Revenue Department further evinces the motives of the colonial overlords.

Ordered, That the superintendent of the press be directed to print one hundred thousand copies of each of the Certificates required by the Collector of the tax on pilgrims at Jugernauth (House of Common Parliamentary Papers, No. 7, 1812-1813 (194):40).

It becomes evident from the formation of colonial policy that from a very early stage of colonial rule, pilgrim as a category fostered anxiety in the governmental machinery and forced it to devise a mechanism to bureaucratically control it. Every pilgrim was given a '*ruwana*' or a 'passport' to enter the temple and it was mandatory to produce the '*ruwana*' to the temple officials in order to enter the premises. The government was not satisfied leaving this duty to the officials of the temple alone and thus,

Figure 3: The designation and number of officials posted at Athur Nullah Ghat and Lokenath Ghat

ATHARA NALA GHAT.			
	Monthly Allowance.	Date of Appointment.	REMARKS.
	Sa. Rs.		
1 Darogah - - -	100	16 Jan. 1806	By order of Government.
1 Peshkar - - -	25	20 - D ^o	- - Ditto.
3 Persian Mohurrurs, at 20 each - - -	60	20 - D ^o	- - Ditto.
1 Murhuttee Neavees -	15	11 Feb. D ^o	At the Darogah's request, Murhuttee being the character in which he transacts business.
1 Persian Mohurrur, at Koomarpura - -	15	17 D ^o	For examining the passes of Pilgrims returning, in order to prevent a crowd at Athara Nala.
3 Bat pandas at the Ghat, at 3 each - - -	9	On the 3d Feb. 2; on the 11th, D ^o	Four by order of Government, the other two found requisite for the Phandeas or inferior Ghats, at which Pilgrims are not allowed to enter.
3 Ditto - at Phandeas, Hoolhoolen, Baloghhat, Khundeeabund, at 3 ea. }	9	- - -	-
1 Potdar - - -	6	20 Jan. 1806	By order of Government.
1 Mohurrur - - -	12	20 - D ^o	- - Ditto.
1 Dufurbund - - -	3	11 Feb. D ^o	The Darogahs request for one, one appearing reasonable.
(Signed) J. H. Acting Collector Tax.			
LOKHNAT GHAT.			
	Monthly Allowance.	Date of Appointment.	REMARKS.
	Sa. Rs.		
1 Darogah - - -	80	16 Jan. 1806	By order of Government.
1 Peshkar - - -	25	20 - D ^o	- - Ditto.
2 Mohurrurs, at 20 each -	40	20 - D ^o	- - Ditto.
1 Naib Treasurer - - -	25	20 - D ^o	Abolished on the 17th Feb. 1806.
1 Potdar - - -	6	20 - D ^o	By order of Government.
1 Mohurrur - - -	12	20 - D ^o	- - Ditto.
1 Dufurbund - - -	3	11 Feb. D ^o	As at Ghat Athara Nala.
1 Bat panda at Ghat -	3	11 - D ^o	-
3 D ^o at Phandeas, Lokhnat, Mungla Ghat, and Machjan, at 3 each -	9	11 - D ^o	To prevent Pilgrims from entering at those roads, and thereby escaping the duties.
1 D ^o at Dantkathica -	3	17 - D ^o	-

Source: House of Common Parliamentary Papers, No. 7, 1812-1813 (194), p 33

in 1806 the collector decided that a new official on the part of the government should be posted at the gate of the temple. This appointment of the new official or *mohurrur* was sanctioned by the Revenue Department as well (House of Common Parliamentary Papers, No. 7, 1812-1813 (194):39-40). The job of this new official was outlined by the collector of tax:

... to examine every ruwana at the gate of the pagoda, and to make a daily report of the number of pilgrims entering. ... The mohurrur at the pagoda will also be a strong check upon the daroghas at the ghats, by making it absolutely necessary that every shoornree should be brought to the suder kuchihree (sic) before the pilgrims can make division (House of Common Parliamentary Papers, No. 7, 1812-1813 (194):39).

The new official that was now appointed was an added check on the existing mechanism. He made sure that counting errors were avoided at all cost. The government wanted to ensure that they had absolute information about anybody entering the town. The government had already counted the numbers once at the Athur Nullah; this new method was simply to make sure that none of the pilgrims could evade the bureaucratic paperwork. The complex mechanism that the colonial state enforced was, in certain ways, a precursor to the kind of action the government would later take during the passing of the Criminal Tribes Act.

The question of the 'pass system' so to speak requires some attention at this point. One of the key aspects of the modern system lies in the notion that the international state system of which they are a part, has expropriated from individuals and private entities:

... the legitimate means of movement, particularly though by no means exclusively across international boundaries (Torpey, 2000:4).

In the 19th century, the concept of the 'pass system' was quite popular elsewhere in the globe as a way of restricting the movement of individuals. The 'pass system' was common in Africa, but it was not particularly aimed at a peripatetic population. In north America, the 'pass system' regulated the movement of slaves from one plantation to another and serious punishments were enforced on slaves without a pass (Fry, 2001:103). The 'pass system' in Puri, like many of its regional variants elsewhere in the world, was one of the painstaking bureaucratic constructions that would later help the modern state to build its own

mechanism for regulating the 'means of control' of its population.

The concept of the passport system was also prevalent in early modern Europe. The imperial police of Prussia issued an ordinance in 1548 in an attempt to control 'vagabonds', 'beggars' and later 'gypsies' (Torpey, 2001:17). In England, after the Civil War 'an alleged upsurge in itinerancy generated by the destitute' (Torpey, 2001:18) made the then monarch, Charles II, restrict movement across parishes. In the early 19th century when the mercantilist notions of 'boogey of depopulation' stormed England, it led to the passing of the First Passengers Act in 1803 (coincidentally, the year Orissa was annexed) which, however, was never 'vigorously' implemented (Torpey, 2001:67). This was the first of the many laws in England that were aimed at a migrant population. The point in consideration is that when the 'pass system' was used by the colonial state in Puri, a climate concerning regulation of itinerants existed in the metropolis and elsewhere in the world. The implementation of a rigorous system, suffused in the paraphernalia of forms and licenses, imposed on the pilgrims in Puri, had its roots in a paranoia regarding itinerants that was experienced by most states of Europe in the 19th century.

However, I do not suggest in any way that the politics of the colonial state was a linear teleological culmination. Countless instances of contradiction within colonial governance can be located. At times, there were differences between the Court of Directors and the officials who were actually overseeing the matter. In 1809, The Court of Directors pointed out that the interference of the Company was far too 'universal' in its approach concerning the Jagannath temple. The Directors made it clear that it was important for the British government to specify the degrees of interference in matters of a 'native religious institution'. William Ramsey, the Secretary to the Court of Directors, in his letter wrote that,

[I]n matters beyond the care of the police, the administration of justice, the 'collection of a tax requisite for the due attainment of those ends', that it would be proper to specify it to the Government, instead of leaving an universal interference in all matters without exception open to them, on the ground of securing the public tranquillity (House of Common Parliamentary Papers, No. 7, 1812-1813 (194):17).

In reply, the secretary of the Commissioner of Affairs of India vehemently opposed the idea of non-interference. He maintained that it is impossible to have a specificity of the degrees of control that could be exercised on the subjects and demanded more government control and intervention. He noted that,:

It appears therefore to the Board to be impracticable to define the degree of interference which should be exercised by the Governor General in Council upon these subjects, by any precise rule which may be applicable to all times and circumstances (House of Common Parliamentary Papers, No. 7, 1812-1813 (194):18).

The Government in India wanted to make sure that the temple and its surrounding jurisdictions remained under the absolute control of the bureaucracy. It is evident that the Court of Directors of the East India

Company was not much vested about the control of population and pilgrimage, but its importance was felt by the men on the spot. Thus, the secretary demanded more power to be vested in the government and kept the specificity of the amount of intervention extremely vague. To control the vast number of pilgrims and the methods that the colonial officials employed, it was essential for the state to have a colossal amount of latitude in the matters of the temple and its functioning. Therefore, when the question of non-interference was invoked by the Court of Directors, it was met with vehement opposition. Many of these surveillance mechanisms depended on the colonial bureaucracy having an amicable relationship with the local temple priests. At least in the early decades of Company rule, the state tried its best to avoid confrontation with the *pandas* (Bengal Revenue Proceedings, No. 21, 29th August 1812) and often gave in to their various demands.

Figure 4: Forms That Were to be Collected and Filled by Pilgrims,

Second. The following are the forms of the certificates to be granted to the different pilgrims :

FORM No. 1.

" A. B. inhabitant of _____ in the district of _____, having this day paid into this office, the sum of sicca rupees _____, is entitled to pass through the _____ ghaut, without further interruption, as a laul jautree, or pilgrim of the first class, to the cutcherry of the collector of tax at Juggernaut. On producing this certificate to the said collector, he is further entitled to receive a pass, and to have access to the temple during thirty days."

Names or designation of Attendants.	Amount of Tax paid by them respectively.	Period for which they are to visit the Temple.

FORM No. 2.

" A. B. inhabitant of _____ in the district of _____ having this day paid into this office the sum of sicca rupees _____ is entitled to pass through the _____ ghaut, without further interruption, as a nimmrlaul, or pilgrim of the second class, to the cutcherry of the collector of tax at Juggernaut. On producing this certificate to the said collector, he is further entitled to receive a pass, and to have access to the temple during ten days, at the time of the Ruth Jatra, or during seven days at any other period."

FORM No. 3.

" A. B. inhabitant of _____ in the district of _____ having this day paid into this office, the sum of sicca rupees two, is entitled to pass through the _____ ghaut, without further interruption, as a bhurring, or pilgrim of the third class, to the cutcherry of the collector of tax at Juggernaut. On producing this certificate to the said collector, he is further entitled to receive a pass, and to have access to the Temple during five days, at the time of the Ruth Jatra, or during four days at any other time."

FORM No. 4.

" A. B. inhabitant of _____ in the district of _____ having this day paid into this office, the sum of sicca rupees two, is entitled to pass through the _____ ghaut, without further interruption, as a punj tirthee, or pilgrim of the fourth class, to the cutcherry of the collector of tax at Juggernaut. On producing this certificate to the said collector, he is further entitled to receive a pass, and to perform the customary ceremonies without the gates of the Temple during sixteen days."

Source: House of Common Parliamentary Papers, No. 7, 1812-1813 (194), p 83

However, it was soon realised by higher authorities that interference in the matters of the temple had gone too far and it needed to be curbed. Regulation IV of 1809 was passed, by which the interior economy and superintendence of the temple was vested with the Raja of Khurda and theoretically, the colonial bureaucracy reduced its intervention in the temple. While the government still held the power to remove the superintendent and much of the reduced interference of the government was restricted to the theoretical plane (see Dube Banerjee, 2001), the significance of the Act of 1809 lies elsewhere.

While the new Act flaunted the British attitude of non-interference in matters of religion, in actuality it enforced strictness in matters of pilgrim control. Ironically, withdrawal in reality meant stronger intervention. On the question of pilgrimage, the new regulation took important strides in the direction of a stricter surveillance system. The regulation made it clear that,

The avenues for the admission of pilgrims shall be confined to two, viz. Ghat Athurrah Nullah on the north, and Ghat Lokenauth on the south-west of the town of Juggernaut Poory (House of Common Parliamentary Papers (Regulation IV 1809, No. VI), No. 7, 1812-1813 (194):82).

The regulation also made the rules regarding 'forms' to enter the town and temple stricter. Four categories of forms were sanctioned for four categories of pilgrims (see Webb, 2007). The four categories of pilgrims were 1. Laal Jatree (first class), 2. Nim Laal Jatree, 3. Bhurrung Jatree, and 4. Kangal Jatree.

The form (Figure 4) contained all the necessary information required by the bureaucracy. These forms could be collected after the payment of pilgrim tax from the offices of the secretary of the Board of Commissioners and the Secretary to the Board of Revenue, the collectors of Cuttack, and Ganjam, and at the two *ghats*. It is important to note that this form was only a pass to enter Puri. Entering the temple required a completely different bureaucratic setup. These forms were submitted to the collector of Puri who issued a 'license' by which a pilgrim could enter the temple. The 'license', as it was termed in the Regulations, was a slight modification of the '*ruwana*' that was previously issued. The license again had the particulars of the pilgrims with a specified date of their stay and the names of the *panda*, who was in charge of the pilgrim. These licenses had to be returned to the collector when a pilgrim was leaving the town. All these were included in a regulation that was 'intended'

to reduce government interference in the temple. The Act succeeded in solidifying the 'paperwork' of the government, helping it to carry on surveillance literally on everybody who could enter the town.

However, I do not argue that pilgrim management was invented by colonialism. Pilgrim management existed long before colonialism made its way into the subcontinent. Pre-colonial texts like *Nitishara* laid out rules for spies to be placed in places of pilgrimage in order to keep surveillance over them (Bayly, 1996:18). My argument solely demonstrates how surveillance on pilgrimage was institutionalised by the colonial state in Orissa.

Other Modalities of Surveillance

Surveillance on pilgrims was not solely executed through head counts and bureaucratic paper work. By the second decade of the 19th century, the government invested itself heavily in building the New Jagannath Trunk Road, which facilitated the large number of pilgrims who came from Bengal. With an official government-sponsored road, the bureaucracy hoped that the pilgrims would solely access that route, and they were correct. The best way to keep an eye on a peripatetic population was to have the knowledge of their steps and the government literally could follow the steps of the pilgrims with the building of this new road. The colonial government had its disquietude about itinerant peddlers and their kind because pragmatically it was impossible to trace their steps (see Bhattacharya, 2006).

The construction of the road was in full swing by the second decade of the 19th century and the government tried its best to make pilgrims avail themselves of it. To speed up the process of building, prisoners from the Cuttack and Puri jails were used as labour in road construction (Ahuja, 2009:181). To make surveillance easier, the government made sure *chowkies* (outposts, spelled as *chokies* in colonial documents) were installed and a *dawk* system imposed for transmission of required information. The superintendent of the road in 1817 wrote:

The pilgrims from Juggernaut have adopted the new line of road from Cutack for the first time, and as soon as chokies of supplies and of the dawk establishment have been arranged, I conceive that the old road would be totally abandoned. The necessary measures for establishment of chokies are now in progress (Bengal Revenue Proceedings, No. 47, 11th July 1817).

However, this optimism did not materialise immediately. In 1820, there was dissatisfaction among the official circles as the new road was not attracting enough people. Further, the government faced opposition from *zamindars* (landlords) and local *ryots* (tenants and cultivators) during the construction of the road, mainly because it disturbed the drainage system of the province (Ahuja, 2009:184). The idea behind constructing the new road was to make it the sole avenue leading to Puri and its failure to attract all the pilgrims would defeat its entire purpose. To have all the pilgrims travelling on the same route would make surveillance simpler, but for such a scenario to materialise, other routes were required to be defunct. Thus, the government took an initiative to furnish some extra amenities for travellers taking the new road and made sure that the population inhabiting near the old road would migrate to the new destination.

It is suggested by the committee of survey... that the government should encourage the inhabitants of the town situated upon the old road, to remove and form bazaars in the vicinity of the new road, but until measures are adopted on the part of the government to render the road available to travellers by surveying them necessary supplies of grain and water or shelter from inclemency of weather an protection from robbers . . . few travellers would frequent that road . . . I would propose that those buildings be constructed on one uniform and convenient plan with mud walls and tiled or thatched roofs. Each serraie (inns or rest houses) should be capable of [hosting] 500 and 600 persons and where water may not be provided, wells should be constructed. For immediate supply of grain one or more moodies might be established at each surraie (sic) by the appointment of the magistrate and for whose protection and the protection of the persons and property of the travellers a small guard of sepoy or burkendauzes from the nearest police thannah might be stationed . . . This might lead the inhabitants of the old road to form bazaars or villages in the vicinity of the new road (Bengal Revenue Proceedings, No. 19, 26th May 1820).

Conclusion

As is evident, the colonial government relied on a vast number of techniques to make surveillance on the peripatetic pilgrims possible. The documentation of identities, the building of the trunk road, setting up *serraies*, installing *burkendauzes* and *sepoy*s were all part of a broader network of surveillance which the colonial government devised to keep a check on

pilgrims in the early 19th century.

The government was always anxious about itinerants; Neeladri Bhattacharya points out that in a society that :

celebrated settled and rooted existence, peddlers and wanderers were always suspected. Not to settle was to violate the norms of the society, that natural order of life.

Thus, those who denied the 'core principle' of settled existence - 'could have no respect for laws that flowed from that core'. A peddler was:

guilty merely because he was a wanderer; guilt was inscribed upon his being. So all peddlers were closely watched, their movements closely followed . . . (Bhattacharya, 2006:190).

The question of guilt was never applied to the pilgrims since they were taking up perhaps one of the most morally sanctioned endeavours of their lives. The concern with peddlers, *kabulis* and gypsies was always one of crime. Bhattacharya points out how the government viewed each peddler with suspicion, and thus, surveillance was more direct and conventional. They were often picked up for questioning by the police and the state was vocal about keeping a watchful eye over them.

Concerns about pilgrimage were never about crime. This made pilgrims not only a special category of itinerants but also a very difficult category for surveillance. The watchful eye had to justify why it was keeping under surveillance an innocuous group of people and thus, it had to invent new techniques to do so. Pilgrimage was never under surveillance in the more conventional sense as we have come to know, but it had its nuances and these nuances make the history of colonial intervention in the temple of Jagannath a special case. The temple-state relationship in most sites in India in the early 19th century was vastly different from what it was in Puri. This was not the quintessential temple-state relationship that Appadurai (1981) documented and many scholars followed in the context of the Madras Presidency (see Presler, 1987). The relationship that the Jagannath temple had with the colonial state should be understood through the rhetoric of pilgrimage and surveillance.

The surveillance modalities of the colonial government would evolve throughout the 19th century and by the mid-1860s, the rhetoric of public health would dominate the discourse. South Asian pilgrimage would cause global concern by the 1860s when the spectre of cholera threatened Europe. The International Sanitary

Conference in Constantinople would accuse Puri as being one of the chief centres for disseminating cholera in India (Harrison, 1994:117; Arnold, 1993:186), which, in turn, was brought to Europe by the pilgrims who visited Mecca. A completely new set of political concerns would emerge that would define and transform the questions on South Asian pilgrimage in the late 19th century, but that is the subject of a future paper.

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